

PATENT

Appl. No. 10/674,687

Amdt. dated March 24, 2005

Reply to Office action of Dec. 16, 2004

03-12582

## REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment and Response is promptly filed to place the above-referenced case in condition for immediate allowance.

The status of the claims are as follows:

Cancelled: 5;

Amended: 1 and 6;

Added: 22 and 23; and

Currently outstanding: 1 – 4, and 6 – 23.

No new matter has been added to the application.

From the outstanding Office action: The Examiner indicated claims 5 – 6, 8 – 10, and 14 – 21 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 14 is an independent claim while claims 15 – 21 all ultimately depend upon claim 14. Consequently, Applicants believe claims 14 -21 are being indicated as allowable and invite further clarification if such is not the case.

Claims 5, 8, and 10 all depend upon claim 1. While claim 5 has been incorporated into claim 1 to secure allowable subject matter, new claims 22 and 23 correspond to the incorporation of claims 8 and 10, respectively, into claim 1.

As a result of the claim amendments, Applicants believe that all claims, claims 1 – 4 and 6 – 23 are allowable with the amendments made to the claims not introducing any new matter nor narrowing the scope of any of the claims in order to conform with statute.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has also cited a number of patents and publications as pertinent to the presently claimed invention. Since none of these have been relied upon as a reference against Applicants' claims as amended, no further comment is deemed necessary.

In view of the above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his position in view of the remarks made herein and the structural distinctions now set forth. The Examiner's rejections of the outstanding claims are believed to no longer apply. It is now believed that this application has been placed in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested. Prompt and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Any statements made herein with respect to the disclosures in the cited references represent the present opinions of the undersigned attorney. In the event that the Examiner disagrees with any of such opinions, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the respective references providing the basis for a contrary view.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone or other conference would be of value in expediting the prosecution of the present application, enabling an Examiner's amendment or other meaningful discussion of the case, Applicants invite the Examiner to contact Applicants' representative at the number listed below.

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With the above-referenced changes, it is believed that the application is in a condition for allowance; and Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to pass the application on to allowance. Applicant submits herewith a check for payment of the additional claims and the one-month extension fees. It is not believed that any additional fees are due; however, in the event any additional fees are due, the Examiner is authorized to charge Applicants' Attorney's Deposit Account No. 03-2030.

Respectfully submitted,

CISLO & THOMAS LLP

Date: March <sup>✓</sup>24, 2005

  
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Date